



Which Oils are Best?

All oils have equal amounts of fat and calories, although different kinds of oil vary in the types of fat they contain. Oils typically have less saturated fat than other types of fats such as butter and shortening. Polyunsaturated fat is found in vegetable oils like safflower, corn, sunflower and soybean. Unlike saturated fat, polyunsaturated fat does not raise our cholesterol levels. In fact, it lowers levels of the bad cholesterol lipid known as low-density-lipoprotein (LDL). Monounsaturated fat is considered to be probably the healthiest type of general fat. Monounsaturated fat is believed to lower cholesterol and may assist in reducing heart disease. It is also believed to offer protection against certain cancers, like breast cancer and colon cancer. Monounsaturated fats are typically high in Vitamin E, the anti-oxidant vitamin which is usually in short supply in many Western diets. Sources of monounsaturated fat include olive oil (73 per cent) rapeseed oil (60 per cent) hazelnuts (50 per cent) almonds (35 per cent) Brazil nuts (26 per cent) cashews (28 per cent) avocado (12 per cent) sesame seeds (20 per cent) pumpkin seeds (16 per cent). Unlike regular olive oil, light olive oil is processed to have a light color and a subtle flavor, more like vegetable oils. Either variety of olive oil makes an excellent choice. Both are considered heart-healthy selections. From a calorie viewpoint, however, there is no difference between monounsaturated, polyunsaturated fat and saturated fat. Because ALL fats are high in calories. Remember to use moderate amounts to avoid getting too much fat and calories.

For more information on types of fat and their role in a healthy diet, contact your local **Health and Wellness Center (HAWC)** or **Dietitian**.

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